

**Amy Wynn, Executive Director
Northwest Connecticut Arts Council
Serving 23 Towns in Northwest Connecticut**

The region served by the Arts Council includes Barkhamsted, Bethlehem, Colebrook, Cornwall, Falls Village/Canaan, Goshen, Hartland, Harwinton, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, New Hartford, New Milford, Norfolk, North Canaan, Plymouth, Salisbury/Lakeville, Sharon, Thomaston, Torrington, Warren, Washington, and Winchester/Winsted.

I come before you today as the a representative of the Northwest Connecticut Arts Council, its many constituents as well as a board member of the CT Arts Alliance.

Northwest Connecticut has benefited enormously from the many supportive programs provided by the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT). There are approximately 200 cultural institutions and hundreds of individual artists and artisans in our area, which serves 185,000 residents as well as many thousands of visitors. Those cultural institutions include:

- Theatres
- Dance Schools
- Concert venues
- Music Schools
- Historical societies and sites
- Libraries
- Art Associations

And many non-arts organizations that offer cultural programming to the people in our very rural area, including:

- Places of worship
- Community centers
- Towns halls
- Schools, both public and private

Many of them receive funding from CCT and many of them receive other types of support from CCT, all of which is important.

The funding supports:

- jobs
- leverages other funding through the required match
- projects that encourage the economy through spending

When organizations such as Tri-Arts Sharon Playhouse, the Warner Theatre, Litchfield Jazz Festival, Thomaston Opera House, Music Mountain, Washington Art Association, Nutmeg Conservatory of the Arts, After School Arts Program, Pilobolus dance, the Litchfield Historical Society and many more receive funding from CCT the entire region benefits economically.

- Jobs in the box offices, back stage, building exhibits or scenery, teaching students, administering programs and many more are supported
- These organizations spend money producing print materials, purchasing lumber, catering meals, and on operational expenses like phone, electricity, travel, heating, maintenance
- Audiences spend money on gas, food and lodging.

In my region's towns, our community leaders have begun to understand that it is the arts and cultural industry that pays off. Many of the small towns don't have the infrastructure to support large industry, but they do have many cultural assets that play into tourism and quality of life.

In these tough economic times, we understand the incredible challenge you face as legislators to balance the budget. However, I am here to urge you to make sure that CCT remains a truly effective agency. This means that it must:

- have the financial resources to continue to support arts and culture in CT
- maintain the position both regionally and nationally as a Tourism destination, promoting arts and culture through a broad range of programs built by the tourism districts.

We are concerned about the proposed consolidation of CCT into the Department of Economic and Community Development because it may cause CCT to lose its hard earned and valued identity and visibility. Based on the state's study of the economic impact of Culture and Tourism, for every dollar the State appropriates to the Commission on Culture & Tourism (CCT) \$9.30 is generated in net state and local revenue.* that's money that can be used towards other

worthy causes and needs the state has. It makes no sense, or perhaps we should say it make no cents, to diminish the effectiveness of CCT when it generates more revenue than it costs.

Some other interesting points for you to consider are:

Culture and tourism activities account for over \$14 billion in Connecticut economic activity each year and generate 170,000 jobs – 10% of the Connecticut labor force and \$9.4 billion of personal income. Over \$1.7 billion of state and local revenues depend on culture and tourism.

Over 22 million people per year experience Connecticut's cultural attractions.*

In addition, just considering the Arts:

Arts = Jobs

The arts employ over 27,000 people in Connecticut; the arts industry supports over 44,000 jobs statewide.*

Connecticut ranks as the 4th highest among the 50 states in numbers of artists in the workforce, with a total of 29,86, and ranks 7th in number of artists per capita.***

The arts benefit the Economy

The arts generate over \$3.8 billion in gross state product annually, including \$2.6 billion in personal income.*

State arts funding is seed money

State funding for the arts (grants to arts organizations and artists) is matched by private sector contributions at the rate of \$11 for every dollar spent by the state.*

Cultural Vitality

Three of Connecticut's cities - The New Haven, Stamford and Hartford metropolitan areas - ranked in the top ten communities nation-wide in the number of non-profit arts organizations, community celebrations and festivals and arts jobs, according to a national 2006 study.**

The arts make Connecticut a more vibrant place to live and work making it an asset when recruiting top executives and in keeping current employees. It provides opportunities for enjoyment and education.

Culture and Tourism work together: The state's world-class theaters, museums, and festivals lure visitors to our state.

More about the Northwest Connecticut Arts Council:

The mission of the Northwest Connecticut Arts Council is to **promote** the arts and cultural resources of Northwestern Connecticut as integral contributors to the quality of life in the region, to **assist** all artists and cultural organizations in their efforts to thrive, and to **inform** the general public about, and **give access** to the arts and culture of the region.

The Northwest Connecticut Arts Council was established in June 2003, as the result of a collaborative partnership between the Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut (formally the Torrington Area Foundation for Public Giving) and the Northwest Connecticut Chamber of Commerce. The Northwest Connecticut Arts Council serves as a **central source for cultural information** for its 23-town service area and surroundings. Services include:

- Online and printed Events Calendar
- CultureBeat newsletter
- Cultural Directory
- Information about Opportunities and avenues for Instruction in the arts
- Advocacy efforts
- Workshops for the cultural community
- Networking opportunities (Culture Mix events; Roundtable discussions, etc.)
- Peer Advisory Network program
- Directory of CT Authors and Literary Venues

* From the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism's 2007 Economic Impact Study

** study conducted by the Urban Institute entitled "Cultural Vitality in Communities."

*** According to a National Endowment for the Arts study "Artists in the Workforce 1990-2005"